

BHUTAN

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSERVATION STORY YOU'VE NEVER HEARD



A country reveals a lot about itself by what it chooses to save. In Bhutan, where the constitution ensures 60% of the country will remain under original forest cover, the heartbeat of the country is its conservation ethic.

The global WWF Network is building on a 40-year relationship

with the Kingdom of Bhutan to create—along with key partners—Bhutan for Life, a transition fund comprising public and private resources that will allow Bhutan to finance its remarkable system of parks forever.

And while wildlife is thriving, a young and ambitious human population must prosper also, through well-managed economic development. Achieving this balance is the goal of Bhutan for Life.

If every country had the ethos and worldly spirit of determination found in Bhutan, the planet our children will inherit would be a far better place. Please join us in making Bhutan for Life a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carter Roberts'.

Carter Roberts
President and CEO





There exists a land, a small happy kingdom tucked away in the Himalayas, protected by formidable mountain ranges and thick exuberant forests. This tiny country, the heart of the Himalayan region, is Bhutan.



The country contains bounties of beguiling botany, its untouched forests shelter multifarious wildlife, the mountains flow with pure sparkling waters, and the sky remains true blue all year. However, there are looming dangers that threaten to halt the burgeoning of this pristine paradise.

Bhutan for Life is the rescue mission, a funding solution that will fortify Bhutan's conservation efforts and allow the country to sustain its commitment to environmental protection for eternity.

And the leader of this mission is you. You are the hero of our story.

With your support for Bhutan for Life, you will keep Bhutan's conservation story alive—the heart of the Himalayas beating strong, reverberating across our rivers and over our mountains back to you.

Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay
Prime Minister of Bhutan

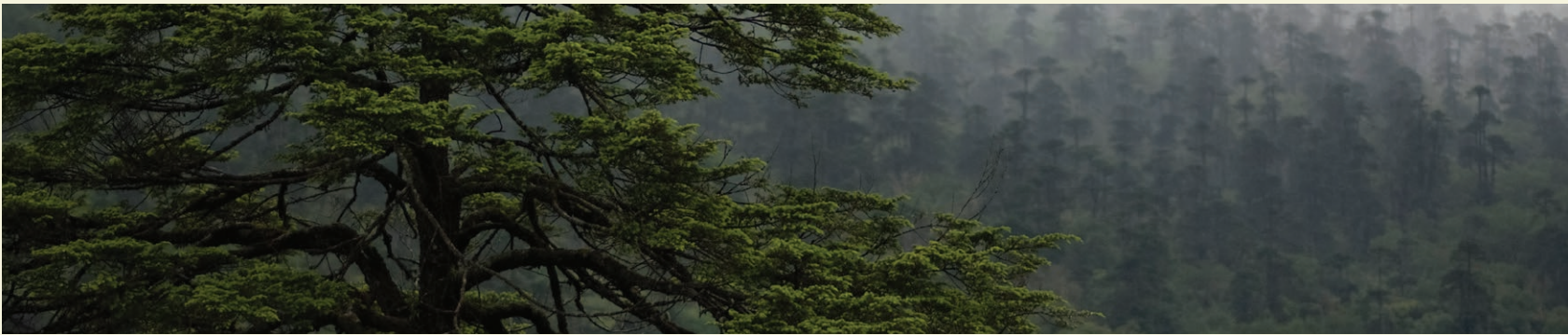


View of the Himalayas from Dochula

A CONSERVATION FAIRY TALE – THAT ACTUALLY EXISTS

Over the last 45 years, a small, little-known country in the distant Himalayas quietly and unassumingly became a conservation treasure. [It's an incredible story that few people are aware of.](#)

A PLACE WHERE CONSERVATION IS NOT JUST AN ASPIRATION... IT'S A CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

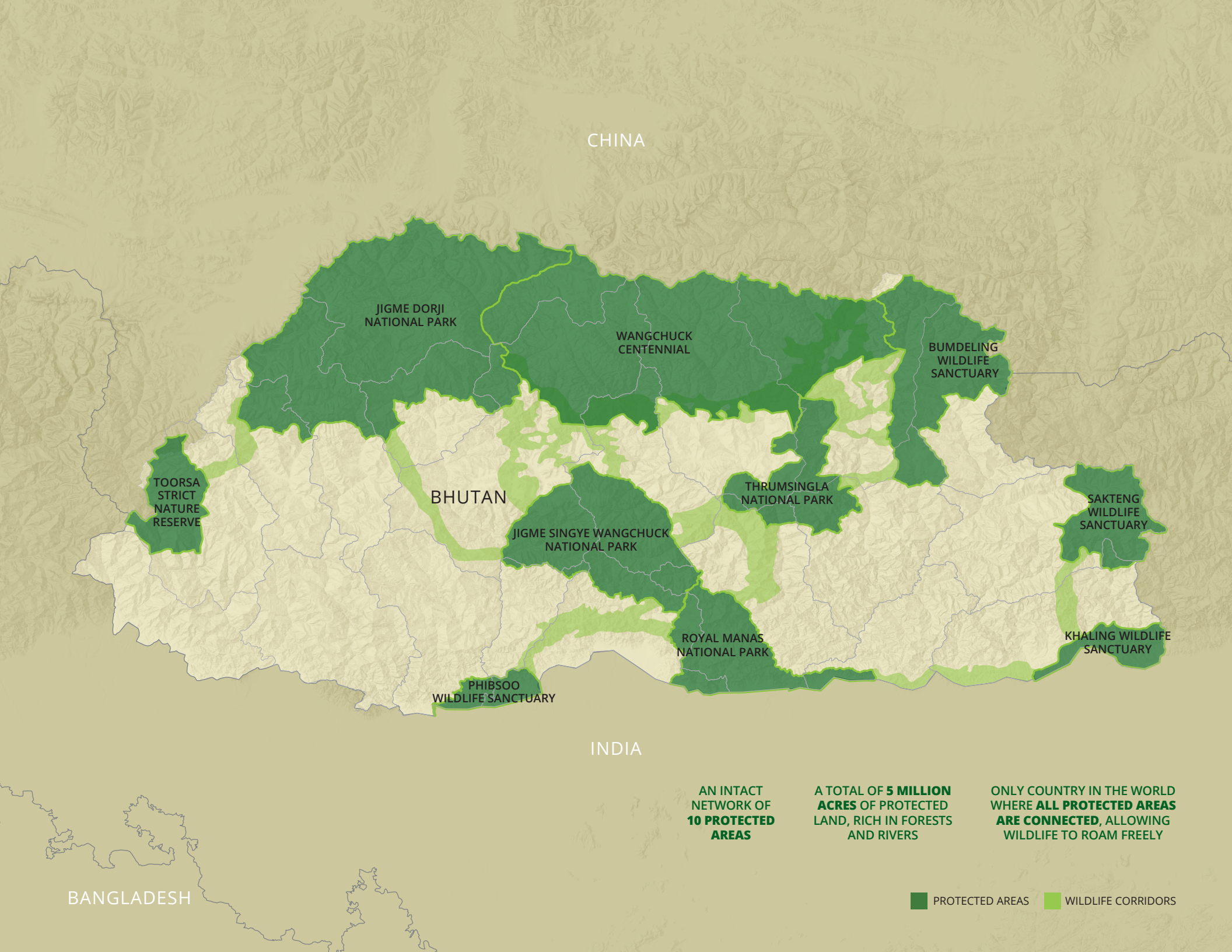


Ancient hemlock in a mountain pass

In Bhutan, environmental protection has always been considered vitally important to the nation's Buddhist values. So much so that beginning in the 1970s Bhutan's monarchs began championing visionary conservation policies. And when Bhutan recently transitioned into a democracy, the monarchs' profound conservation legacy was continued by the new government, which literally wrote conservation into the country's first constitution.

It is now legally mandated that 60% of the country's land be maintained under forest cover...forever.

The result: one of the world's smallest countries now has one of the world's biggest commitments to conservation.



CHINA

JIGME DORJI
NATIONAL PARK

WANGCHUCK
CENTENNIAL

BUMDELING
WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY

TOORSA
STRICT
NATURE
RESERVE

BHUTAN

JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUCK
NATIONAL PARK

THRUMSINGLA
NATIONAL PARK

SAKTENG
WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY

PHIBSOO
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

ROYAL MANAS
NATIONAL PARK

KHALING WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY

INDIA

AN INTACT
NETWORK OF
**10 PROTECTED
AREAS**

A TOTAL OF **5 MILLION
ACRES** OF PROTECTED
LAND, RICH IN FORESTS
AND RIVERS

ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD
WHERE **ALL PROTECTED AREAS
ARE CONNECTED**, ALLOWING
WILDLIFE TO ROAM FREELY

BANGLADESH

PROTECTED AREAS WILDLIFE CORRIDORS



A WEALTH OF NATIVE WILDLIFE



Opposite: Black-necked cranes. Above, L to R: Bengal tiger; blood pheasants; takin; snow leopards

This abundance of pristine protected areas is a haven for wildlife.

Some 5,000 plant species are found in Bhutan's natural spaces, as well as more than 200 mammal and 700 bird species—all with the space they need to roam free.

This includes endangered species like Bengal tigers, snow leopards, and Asian elephants, as well as exotic birds like the black-necked crane and the white-bellied heron, one of the rarest birds in the world.

A WEALTH OF BENEFITS TO PEOPLE – LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY



L to R: A local hotel manager books reservations; a tributary of the Thimpu River; a Bhutanese nun makes an incense offering. Opposite: Centenary Farmers Market in Thimpu

The nation's natural richness doesn't just help wild species. It helps people, too.

As word about Bhutan's rich biodiversity spreads, ecotourism is becoming a growing industry, providing increased job opportunities for local people. Conserving wild areas also allows the nation's Buddhist citizenry to maintain a deeply held cultural and religious value—ensuring balance between humans and nature.

Bhutan's rivers, which flow into neighboring India, Bangladesh and beyond, are part of a network of rivers that provide water for at least one-fifth of the world's population. Its forests sequester more than 6.3 million tons of carbon dioxide, helping to reduce global warming.





BUT THE FUTURE OF BHUTAN'S CONSERVATION PARADISE IS NOW AT A TIPPING POINT



Opposite: A young farmer sells fresh produce roadside. Above: For many Bhutanese youth, traditional dress has given way to Western fashions.

After decades of sustaining this treasure for Bhutan and the world, times are changing and new pressures are rising up.

One big change is the shift in age demographics. Today, more than 60% of Bhutan's population is under the age of 34, and much of that population is looking for work. And because this generation is also more highly educated than ever before, the work they seek is increasingly in skilled labor.

Fearing there will not be enough job opportunities in the rural areas, many are leaving to find work in the nation's cities. This means that fewer stewards of the land are left in the protected areas.

And as rural Bhutan is losing this critical population of conservation stewards, dangerous threats are entering from the outside.

POACHING AND HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICTS ARE ON THE RISE



A herd of Asian elephants. Opposite: A farmer and his dog stand guard against wild animals that might raid his crops at night.

As nearby countries have depleted their own natural resources, their sights have turned toward Bhutan's attractive natural riches. This has brought some serious new problems to the country.

Most concerning, poachers and illegal logging operations are entering the country's wild areas with increasing frequency, and in numbers that Bhutan's current enforcement capacity is unable to match.

Along with this, as both human and wildlife populations continue to rise, there is more human-wildlife contact, which leads to more human-wildlife conflict. Bhutan does not yet have sufficient programs in place to address these incidents and help rural residents mitigate such threats in a responsible, conservation-friendly way.





OUTSIDE AID IS DECREASING... WHILE PRESSURE TO DEVELOP IS INCREASING



Opposite: Electricity switching station. Above: Logging is on the rise.

The Bhutanese government wants to address all these new threats and protect the conservation investment it has built up. It has goals to increase enforcement, provide training programs for rangers and local people, and develop job opportunities for people in rural areas. Of course, all this requires funding beyond what has previously been allotted for conservation.

And, just as all these new threats and critical funding needs have arrived on Bhutan's doorstep, its foreign

aid is declining. And that means less money available for conservation.

Even more troubling, as the country's funding sources decline, there is an ever-rising pressure to mine and build on land in or near Bhutan's protected areas. Without any other financial solution, these options may become more attractive than conservation...that is, if nothing is done to address them preemptively.

INCREASED CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS MAKE PROTECTING BHUTAN'S FORESTS EVEN MORE CRUCIAL



Men build a traditional home. Opposite: Forest canopy of ferns and other epiphytes

Bhutan is part of the Eastern Himalayas region—an area where the impacts of climate change are often more severe than anywhere else in the world. The region's glaciers have been melting at alarming rates, and it is suffering increasingly intense rainstorms, which bring damaging floods and landslides in their wake.

As mentioned earlier, Bhutan's forests sequester millions of tons of carbon dioxide—a function crucial to stabilizing climate. Given the critical role these

forests play in a place already so threatened by climate change, it's clear that a significant loss of trees would be highly damaging to the region—and even to global climate management.

All this makes it even more urgent to help Bhutan find the funding it needs to protect its conservation investment for the long term, so it can ensure that its forests stay healthy and any development that is undertaken is done responsibly.





YOU CAN HELP ENSURE THIS CONSERVATION TREASURE REMAINS – NOT JUST FOR TODAY, BUT FOREVER



Opposite: View over the Himalayas from the Royal Botanical Gardens. Above, L to R: Senior monks gather at a monastery; traditional painting; incense at a farmers market; schoolboys in traditional dress

For decades, the government of Bhutan has stayed true to its commitments. It has worked closely with WWF to build this treasure so that both conservation and economic development can occur in a balanced, sustainable way.

But the rapidity with which new threats are rising, combined with the downswing in foreign aid, means that Bhutan must now adjust its approach, quickly and preemptively. And those changes will require financial support—from both inside and outside the country.

In short, Bhutan needs a solid new conservation-friendly business plan. One that will not just protect, but will grow the initial capital Bhutan has put into its incredible conservation efforts. And one that ensures those efforts will eventually become self-sustaining.

And Bhutan needs some help to get that plan off the ground quickly, before it's too late.

We have developed just such a plan, and you can be an important part of making it a reality.

BHUTAN FOR LIFE – AN INNOVATIVE FUNDING SOLUTION

Bhutan for Life uses a new kind of funding approach for conservation. It is based on a Wall Street model of project finance for organizing and financing complex, expensive and well-defined projects and is designed to provide guarantees to both investors and Bhutan's forests.

The approach begins with the development of a conservation plan with a set of targeted goals, as well as a financial plan for how to reach those goals.

Next, a “multi-party, single closing” approach is employed that ensures the security of the investment. Basically, in this approach, a group of donors commit funds toward the greater goal of helping a new or expanded operation get under

way (in this case, the “operation” is Bhutan's conservation work). However, all funds are held and not distributed until (1) the total fundraising commitment goal has been reached, and (2) all key legal and financial conditions that have been agreed upon in advance are met. This serves to leverage funding by providing funders with an up-front guarantee that their support will be put to best use.

When all of the conditions are met, the project will move forward and the donated funds will be distributed annually over 15 years. During that time, the government of Bhutan will also increase its spending—in part by creating new funding sources—until it fully assumes the costs of conservation.



Giant Buddha overlooking the capital city of Thimpu



A critically endangered white-bellied heron takes flight

BHUTAN FOR LIFE – WHAT THE INVESTMENT WILL GO TOWARD

The ultimate goal of Bhutan for Life is to put in place conditions that will allow the nation of Bhutan to maintain its commitment to conservation and sustainable development in perpetuity, and to do so in a self-sustaining way.

To do this, WWF, the government of Bhutan and other partners have worked together to assess the country's most critical conservation needs, now and in the long term, and provide targeted solutions to meet them. Each of these solutions is designed to address one or more of the threats mentioned earlier, such as poaching, illegal logging, climate change and limited job opportunities.

Supporters' funds will be applied to those solutions, including projects that will

Strengthen enforcement and management of protected areas

- build guard posts and buy vehicles that can be used to patrol the forests
- create maps that identify where natural resources within protected areas can be harvested responsibly

- build trails and visitor interpretation centers for tourists to use

Protect, save and monitor wildlife and habitat

- train park staff to manage and monitor endangered species using GPS and other cutting-edge technology
- restore critical wildlife habitat
- create wildlife rescue centers

Support people through job creation and community improvements

- create systems that compensate people whose crops have been damaged during human-wildlife conflicts
- train youth in how to create nature-based enterprises
- help communities adapt to climate change by teaching them how to manage their forests responsibly

Note: This is an abbreviated overview of the types of projects Bhutan for Life funding will support. Additional information is available upon request.

BHUTAN FOR LIFE – FUNDING GOAL

The fundraising efforts for the Bhutan for Life project are led by the government of Bhutan and WWF. Both will be contributing funds toward the Bhutan for Life goals, but for the project to be successful funding is needed from both the public and private sector.

The current fundraising goal range is \$35 million to \$45 million.



Local woman who runs a homestay for travellers

BECOME A PART OF ONE OF THE GREATEST CONSERVATION STORIES EVER TOLD



L to R: Red panda; prayer flags over Paro Valley; painter working on a homestay; river curving through forests in rural Bhutan. Opposite: Monk in Punakha Dzong

Your support of the Bhutan for Life project is more than just a financial contribution. It's a legacy for a lifetime—and beyond.

It's a gift that can protect thousands of species; save more than 5 million acres of pristine land and rivers; help thousands of people earn a living for themselves and their families; aid in providing fresh drinking water to one-fifth of the world; help keep all of Earth's population better buffered from climate change; and ensure one of the most

remarkable living conservation fairy tales continues to be a reality. Not just today, but forever.

Bhutan for Life.

Every fairy tale needs a hero.

For more information visit worldwildlife.org/bhutan
Or contact us at bhutan@wwfus.org



