

## White-Bellied Heron

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Institute for IAS Examination



# WHITE-BELLIED HERON

### White-Bellied Heron Latest News

A recently submitted proposal for Arunachal Pradesh's Kalai-II hydel project skips mentioning the habitat of the critically endangered White-Bellied Heron.

### About White-Bellied Heron

- The white-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*) is a large heron species. It is the second largest living species of heron.
- **Other Names:** It is also known as the **imperial heron or great white-bellied heron.**
- **Habitat:** It inhabits the **wetlands of tropical and subtropical forests** in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas.
- **Distribution:** It is mainly living in the foothills of the **eastern Himalayas in northeast India and Bhutan to northern Myanmar.**
- **Morphological Adaptations**
  - It is a slightly longer neck and compact body with shorter legs and extensive toes.

- The extra elongated, **flexible neck with razorsharp serrated bill** allows them to catch fish far in deep waters.
- **Diet:** It prefers free-flowing riverine habitats with low disturbance, and predominantly **depends on fish found in the river rapids.**
- **Biological Role:** Its presence in our ecosystem indicates the health of the rivers, the environment, the fish population, and water quality.
- **Threats:** It is threatened by **habitat loss, increasing disturbance and habitat degradation** due to conversion of wetlands for agriculture and expansion of settlements.

## Conservation Status of White-Bellied Heron

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule-I.

Source: **IE**

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