

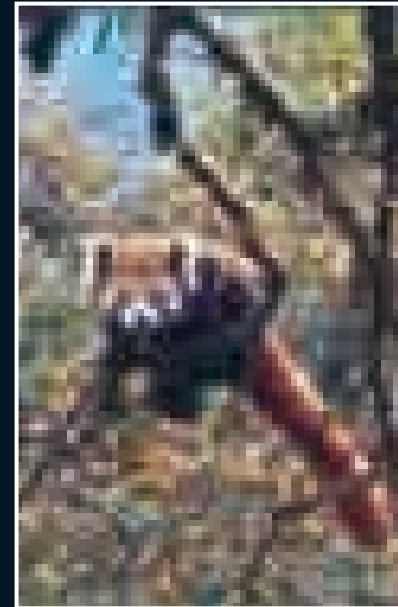
About the book

The novel idea of having a comprehensive, academic book, celebrating the unique biodiversity of Sikkim was conceptualized by the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Shri Pawan Chamling. The book is unique in the sense that it encapsulates scientific information in a user-friendly coffee table format. The book has been made possible by sharing of knowledge, based on years of in-depth research in the state, by several scholars affiliated to premier research institutes. Also several experts have selflessly contributed their photographs. It covers topics related to biogeography, lichens, mushrooms, ferns, flowering plants, trees, orchids, alpine vegetation, NTFP, fish, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, birds, pheasants, mammals, red panda, cold desert, agro-biodiversity, pollinators and aspects of forest conservation and management including green governance. This book will help to consolidate the growing scientific literature in the state and assist budding scientists to assess the present state of knowledge. Amateurs, nature lovers, students, scientists and tourists wanting to know more about the fascinating natural wealth of Sikkim will also find the book of immense use.



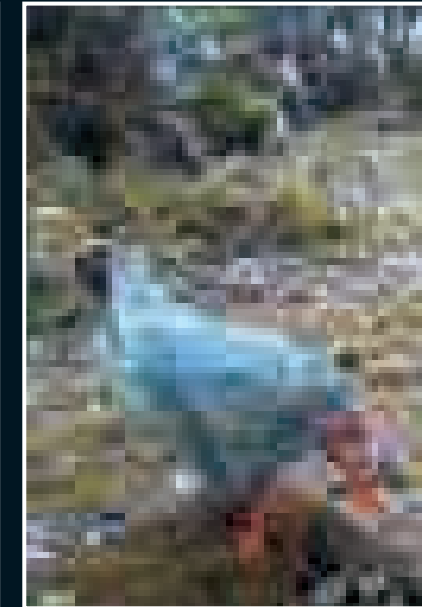
Mt. Khangchendzonga (8,598 meters) globally the third highest peak, and highest in the country. This peak is revered as Sikkim's Guardian Deity and creates a unique ecosystem - the Khangchendzonga sacred landscape

State Animal



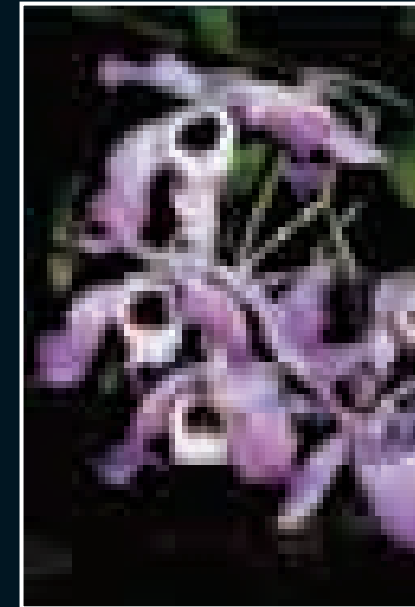
Ailurus fulgens
RED PANDA

State Bird



Ithaginis cruentus
BLOOD PHEASANT

State Flower

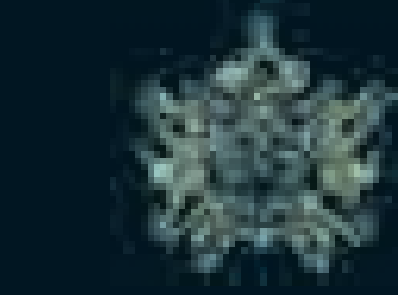


Dendrobium nobile
NOBLE ORCHID

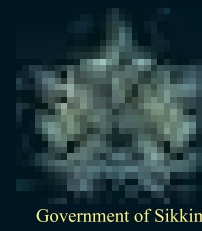
State Tree



Rhododendron niveum
SNOW-LEAVED RHODODENDRON

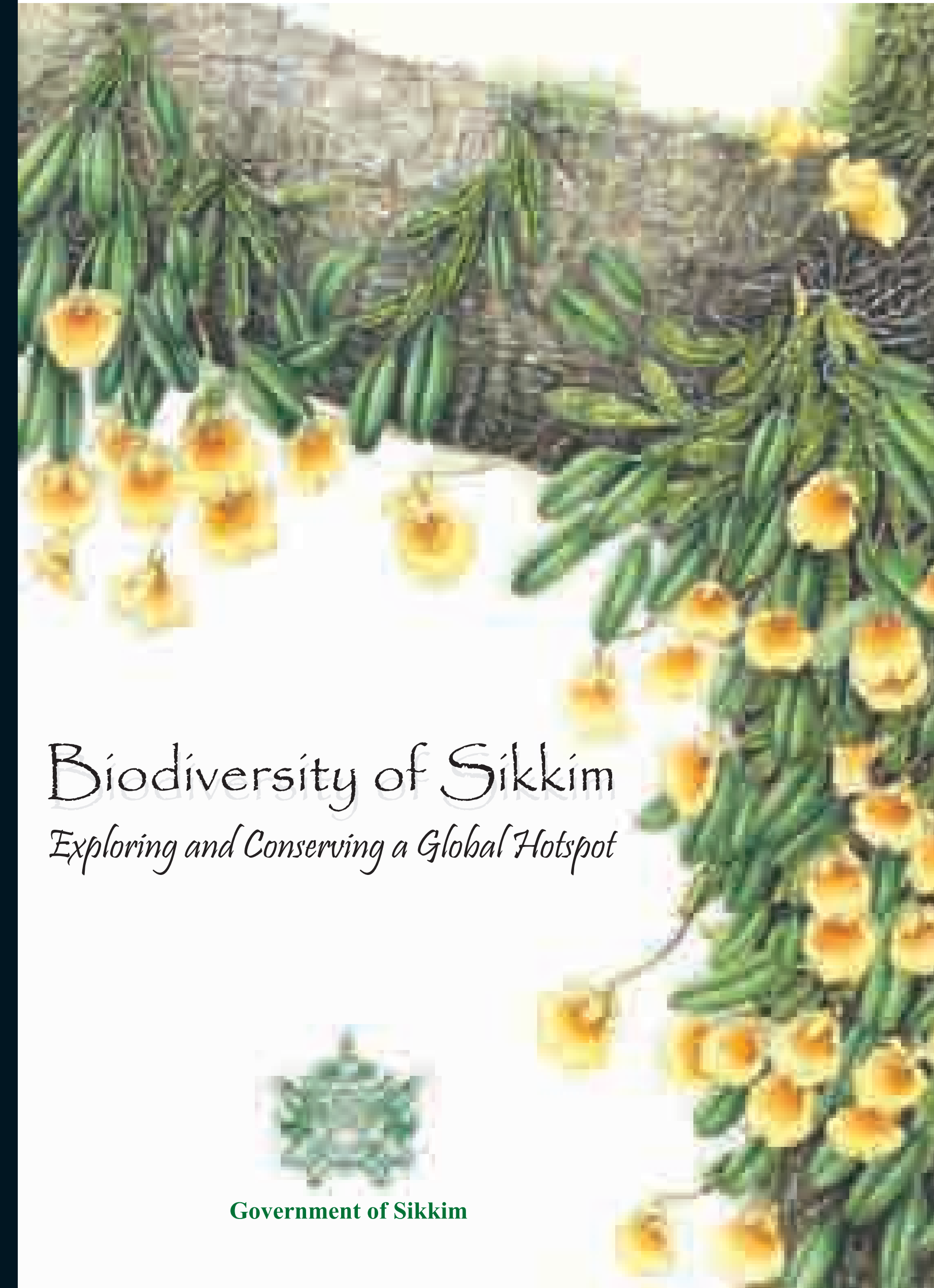


Government of Sikkim



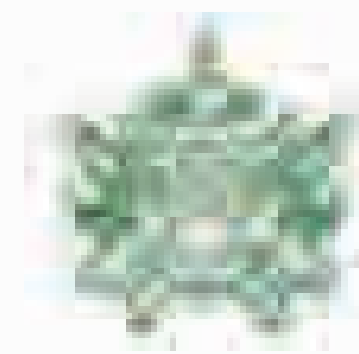
Government of Sikkim

Biodiversity of Sikkim
Exploring and Conserving a Global Hotspot



Biodiversity of Sikkim

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Sikkim is located in the Eastern Himalayas and is globally renowned for its biological diversity and traditional knowledge associated with it. It is a part of this global biodiversity hotspot. The unique terrain, climate and biogeography of the state have resulted in the sustenance of varied eco-zones in close proximity. Also the harmonious presence of several ethnic groups, having their distinct identity and practising their traditional livelihoods add to the treasure house of knowledge related to this biodiversity. Biogeographically it is enriched by both west and east Himalayan biogeographic provinces. It has close proximity to both the Tibetan Plateau in the north and Bay of Bengal towards the south, thereby having affinities with tropical moist forests in the south and cold desert in the north within a short distance. In a landmass of just 7,096 square kilometres, it houses elevations ranging between 300 to 8,598 meters. The diverse forest types include deciduous Sal, wet hill forests, dense Oak forests, extensive conifer forests and unique Rhododendron thickets giving way to rolling alpine meadows. Ecosystems range from humid tropical valleys to temperate montane habitat, alpine meadows and trans-himalayan cold desert. It is a veritable nature's Noah's Arc teeming with biodiversity, housing nearly half of the country's wild trees, orchid and Rhododendron wealth and one third of the country's flowering plants. No wonder as many as 165 plants have been named after Sikkim. The state possesses about 31% of the mammals, 45% of the birds and 50% of the butterflies of the country. The Tso Lhamo cold desert in Sikkim supports India's only population of the Southern Kiang (*Equus kiang polyodon*) and also significant populations of the Tibetan gazelle (*Procapra picticaudata*) and the Tibetan argali (*Ovis ammon hodgsonii*).

Photo credits

Cover page

Dendrobium jenkinsii:
Painting by Hemlata Pradhan

Back page

Red Panda: Phupu Tshering Bhutia
Blood Pheasant: WII-FEWM Project
Noble Orchid: Pankaj Kumar
Snow-leaved Rhododendron : U. C. Pradhan