



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Nepal

10 Ramsar Site(s) covering 60,561 ha

Beeshazar and Associated Lakes

Site number: 1,313 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Narayani Zone
Area: 3,200 ha | Coordinates: 27°37'N 84°25'59"E | Designation dates: 13-08-2003
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Beeshazar and Associated Lakes. 13/08/03; Chitawan; 3,200 ha; 27°37'N, 084°26'E. National Park buffer zone. An extensive, typical oxbow lake system of the tropical Inner Terai area in Central Nepal, lying inside buffer zone of the Royal Chitwan National Park, a World Heritage site. Situated between the Mahabharat mountain range to the north and the Siwalik range to the south, this forested wetland provides excellent habitat as a water hole and corridor for endangered wildlife species, including the critically endangered White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), endangered tiger (*Panthera tigris*), one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) and Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), vulnerable Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutra perspicillata*), Sloth Bear (*Melalurus ursinus*), Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), Lesser Adjutant Stork (*Leptotilos javanicus*), Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), and Band-tailed fish eagle (*Haileetus leucoryphus*). The surrounding forest area is populated by nearly 100,000 people who practice farming and fishing in the lake, which is managed through a fishing contract, awarded once a year. Thanks to heightened awareness of the site's importance the protection of its resources has been improved, e.g. invasive species posing threats to the wetlands are manually removed by local communities and authorities of the Royal Chitwan National Park. Due to the recent designation as the buffer zone, the Buffer Zone Management Committee has been constituted for its participatory management. There is a training centre for Armed Forest Guards/Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation which was formerly known as the Rhino Patrol, and a visitor center established at Royal Chitwan National Park. Ramsar site no. 1313. Most recent RIS information: 2003.

Ghodaghodi Lake Area

Site number: 1,314 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Seti Zone

Area: 2,563 ha | Coordinates: 28°40'59"N 80°57'E | Designation dates: 13-08-2003

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Ghodaghodi Lake Area. 13/08/03; Kailali District; 2,563 ha; 28°41'N, 080°57'E. A large and shallow oxbow lake with associated marshes and meadows surrounded by tropical deciduous forest on the lower slopes of Siwalik, the youngest mountain range of the Himalaya in Western Nepal. There are around 13 associated lakes and ponds, and some streams separated by hillocks situated on the site's periphery. The forest and wetlands serve as the wildlife corridor between the lowland and the Siwalik. They support critically endangered Red-crowned Roofed Turtle (*Kachuga kachuga*), endangered Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Three-striped Roof Turtle (*Kachuga dhongka*); vulnerable Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutra periscillata*), Common Otter (*Lutra lutra*), Swamp deer (*Cervus duvaucelli*), Lesser Adjutant Stork (*Leptotilos javanicus*) and Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), endangered Orchid (*Aerides odorata*), religiously important and threatened Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), and rare wild rice (*Hygrohiza aristata*). The lake is an important religious place with a shrine dedicated to Ghodaghodi deity where indigenous Tharu people celebrate a traditional festival, Agan Panchami, in December and take a holy bath in the lake. Due to dense population within the site (around 6,700 people of whom 50% are illegal immigrants from adjoining hilly areas), it is intensively used for traditional fishing and agriculture. The factors putting pressure on the site's ecology include highway traffic at the southern edge, construction of unplanned new temples, over grazing, poaching and hunting as well as illegal tree felling and smuggling of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Khair (*Acacia catechu*) timber, natural eutrophication accelerated by human religious and agricultural activities. Nevertheless with the help of IUCN Nepal, the users' groups of local communities and NGOs are involved in the conservation process which has helped to reduce poaching, initiate fencing towards the highway to control grazing and encroachment, and develop a participatory community-centered management plan. Ramsar site no. 1314. Most recent RIS information: 2003.

Gokyo and associated lakes

Site number: 1,692 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Sagarmatha Zone

Area: 7,770 ha | Coordinates: 27°57'N 86°40'59"E | Designation dates: 23-09-2007

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Gokyo and Associated Lakes. 23/09/07; Sagarmatha; 7,770 ha; 27°57'N 086°42'E. Within Sagarmatha National Park, UNESCO World Heritage site. A system of glacial lakes at 4,710m-4,950m altitude in the high Himalayan region at the base of Cho Oyo (the world's 6th highest mountain), not far from Mt Everest, at the headwaters of the Dudh Koshi River which is part of the Ganges river system. The alpine pasture meadow and sloping mountain terrain support a number of IUCN Redlisted rare and vulnerable species, such as the kutki plant (*Neopicrorhiza scrophulariifolia*), the Himalayan tahr or goat (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), the Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*), Wood snipe (*Gallinago nemoricola*), endemic species like the flowering plant *Kobresia fissiglumis*, and many important birds like *Aythya nyroca* and *Grus vigor*. The system is a vital source of water for downstream communities. There is a small amount of seasonal grazing, by traditional right, and eight hotels with campgrounds serve ecotourists and religious visitors. Garbage and sewage left by visitors is difficult to dispose of and such pollution pressures represent a potential threat, as does overgrazing and deforestation caused by mountaineering expeditions seeking firewood. The site is two days' walk from Namche, the nearest town. Ramsar site no. 1692. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

Gosaikunda and Associated Lakes

Site number: 1,693 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Bagamti Zone

Area: 1,030 ha | Coordinates: 28°04'59"N 85°25'59"E | Designation dates: 23-09-2007

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Gosaikunda and Associated Lakes. 23/09/07; Bagamti; 1,030 ha; 28°05'N 085°25'E. Within Langtang National Park. A treeless region with shrub land interspersed by rocky slopes and alpine pasture, with a complex of at least 15 lakes and ponds at 4,054m-4,620m altitude that provide water for the Trishuli tributary of the Narayani River system. A considerable number of IUCN Redlisted endangered and vulnerable species of fauna and flora are present. The site has religious associations for Hindus and Buddhists and is the locus of the important Gangdashahara and Janaipurnima festivals. Human uses include grazing during summers, and there are four hotels with campgrounds for trekking groups and pilgrims. Threats to the site include pollution from the huge gathering during the festivals. There is a religious ban on the killing of animals within much of the site. Ramsar site no. 1693. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

Jagadishpur Reservoir

Site number: 1,315 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Lumbini Zone

Area: 225 ha | Coordinates: 27°34'59"N 83°04'59"E | Designation dates: 13-08-2003

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Jagadishpur Reservoir. 13/08/03; Kapilvastu; 225 ha; 27°35'N 083°05'E. A reservoir constructed in the early 1970s over the Jakhira lake and agricultural lands for irrigation purposes. The water is fed from the Banganga lake in the Churia hills catchment. The reservoir is surrounded by cultivated land and a few smaller lakes serving as a buffer zone for bird movements. The site provides shelter for an assemblage of some rare, endangered species of conservation importance species, which include plants such as endangered Serpentine (*Rauvolfia serpentine*), rare Pondweed (*Potamogeton lucens*), threatened Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), and endangered and the tallest flying bird species Indian Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone antigone*). The current use of the reservoir by local population includes fishing, grazing, fuel wood and fodder collection, domestic use and supply of water for irrigation in 6,200 ha of surrounding cultivated land. Ramsar site no. 1315. Most recent RIS information: 2003.

Koshi Tappu

Site number: 380 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Sumsari

Area: 17,500 ha | Coordinates: 26°39'N 86°58'59"E | Designation dates: 17-12-1987

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Koshi Tappu. 17/12/87; Kosi; 17,500 ha; 26°39'N 086°59'E. Nature Reserve. A section of the Sapta Kosi River and its floodplain of extensive mudflats, reedbeds, and freshwater marshes. An important staging area for waterbirds, the site supports several species of notable birds (including the Bengal Falcon, Oriental White Ibis, and White-tailed Eagle), and notable mammals, such as the panther. Located in a densely populated area, the site is subject to livestock grazing and attempts by local people to re-establish themselves in the reserve. Land use in surrounding areas includes subsistence fishing and rice cultivation. Ramsar site no. 380. Most recent RIS information: 1995.

Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley

Site number: 2,257 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Gandaki Zone

Area: 26,106 ha | Coordinates: 28°12'20"N 83°59'05"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2016

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Lake Cluster of Pokhara Valley comprises nine lakes of noted beauty along the Pokhara Valley in the mid-hill region of Nepal. Each lake supports significant biodiversity, provides important ecosystem services and sustains local livelihoods. The Site hosts a wide variety of globally threatened migratory birds such as the critically endangered Baer's pochard (*Aythya baeri*) and Indian vulture (*Gyps indicus*), and mammals such as the vulnerable clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) and the endangered Indian pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*). Pokhara is among the areas with the highest rainfall in Nepal, and the Valley and the lakes play an important role in the hydrological cycle of the region by recharging groundwater, controlling floods and trapping sediment. Thousands of people depend on the lakes for income from tourism, fishing, irrigation, electricity generation and water supply: an economic valuation has shown that Phewa Lake provides goods and services worth more than USD 279,000 per year; and the Rupa Lake Restoration and Fishery Cooperative, organized by over 600 households, earns more than USD 56,000 per year from fishing. Meanwhile, religious temples in Pokhara Valley are important to local communities and are commonly visited during festivals.

Mai Pokhari

Site number: 1,850 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region:

Area: 90 ha | Coordinates: 27°00'N 87°55'E | Designation dates: 20-10-2008

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Mai Pokhari. 28/10/08; Ilam; 90 ha; 27°00'N 87°56'E. A permanent freshwater pond to the south of Mt Kanchendjunga (3rd highest peak of world), recharged from natural springs and rainwater which provides a major source of fresh water for local communities. It lies in the eco-tone of Schima-Casanopsis and Oak-laurel vegetation providing habitat for significant epiphytic orchids as well as for protected species such as White-rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) and Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*), and endemic species like Hariya cheparo (*Japalura variegata*). The site has highly significant religious-cultural value as the convergence point of Buddhism, Hinduism and Mundhum (animism) traditions as Mai-Religio-Culture; the site name means mother pond. Introduction of exotic plant and fish species are noted among many potential threats to the site. Ramsar site no. 1850. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Phoksundo Lake

Site number: 1,694 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Karnali Zone

Area: 494 ha | Coordinates: 29°12'N 82°57'E | Designation dates: 23-09-2007

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Phoksundo Lake. 23/09/07; Karnali; 494 ha; 29°12'N 82°57'E. Within Shey-Phoksundo National Park. A glacial lake near Ringmo in the Dolpo region, the deepest lake in the country, that is the centre of endemism in the eastern Himalayan region and a vital source of freshwater for downstream, with the highest waterfall (167m) in Nepal 500m from the lake. The lake, alpine meadows, and bogs provide habitat for a number of rare and vulnerable plants and animals, including the Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*), Musk deer (*Moschus chrysogaster*) and Grey or Tibetan Wolf (*Canis lupus*). The site has great cultural and religious importance, with traditional Tibetan culture of the upper Dolpo and both Buddhism and the ancient Tibetan Bon-Po religion of the lower Dolpo both observed in Ringmo village. There is some grazing and cultivation, but tourism, dependent upon the wetland, is the base of the economy. Overgrazing and pollution from the 42 households of Ringmo village are seen as potential threats to the site. Ramsar site no. 1694. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

Rara Lake

Site number: 1,695 | Country: Nepal | Administrative region: Karnali Zone

Area: 1,583 ha | Coordinates: 29°30'N 82°04'59"E | Designation dates: 23-09-2007

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Rara Lake. 23/09/07; Karnali; 1,583 ha; 29°30'N 082°05'E. National Park. The largest lake in Nepal, lying at about 2,900m altitude and providing water to the important Kamali River. The area has developed unique floral and faunal assemblages with a number of rare and vulnerable fauna and flora species, and the wet alpine pasture, moraines, and damp stream banks along the lake area are the natural habitats for endemic species of plants. The endemic frog Rara paha (*Paa rarica*) is found at only one other location in the Central region, and three endemic species of snow trout, Asala macha (*Schizothorax macropterus*, *S. nepalensis*, and *S. raraensis*), are found only here. Two temples in the area are the venue for a number of religious festivals. The people of the area speak a dialect that is considered the former or original form of the Nepali language. Principal threats come from pollution caused by army personnel and tourists and unregulated fuelwood collection, especially during festivals. Ramsar site no. 1695. Most recent RIS information: 2007.